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THE JERUSALEM POST

PESSAH MAGAZINE



'We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt' (See Index, page 87c)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1972

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Wadi of the Pilgrims

Travellers crossing the Sinai peninsula for the past 2,000 years and probably more have stopped off at a spring in Wadi Haggaj, 160 kms. south-west of Eilat and rested in the shade of the sandstone cliffs. Beginning with the Nabateans, many have recorded their visits by making inscriptions in the soft stone. A Hebrew University archaeology team has studied graffiti from Jewish, Christian and Arab pilgrims as well as the Nabateans, writes The Post's **MALKA RABINOWITZ.**

OVER 400 rock inscriptions have been found by Israeli archaeologists since the Six Day War in a Sinai desert ravine called Wadi Haggaj (Ravine of the Pilgrims), located near a large spring about 160 kms. south-west of Eilat.

Hebrew University archaeologist Avraham Negev, who explored the area several months ago, says the earliest inscriptions are those of the Nabateans, a talented and literate tribe of Arab origin who penetrated Trans-Jordan some time in the 4th century B.C.E., established their capital at Petra, and continued on to the Negev to set up caravan stations at Avdat, Nitzana and other sites. Their history touches that of the Jews most closely in the person of King Herod the Great, whose mother was the daughter of a noble from Petra.

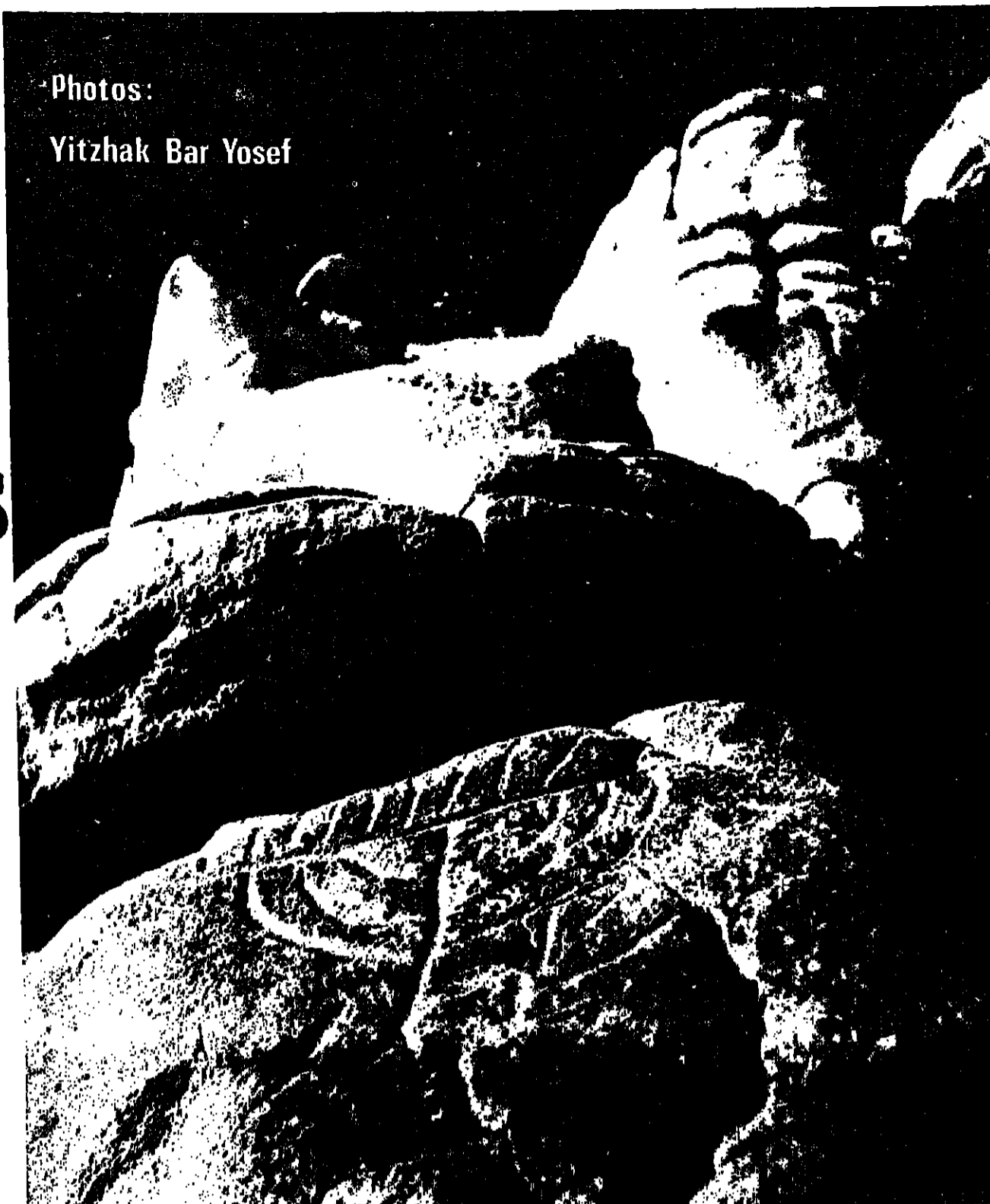
It now appears that Nabateans were travelling along the eastern coast of Sinai, through Wadi Haggaj, at least as early as the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E. Their language, a dialect of Aramaic, is scratched into rocks along the gorge and, happily for the archaeologists, some of the inscriptions carry dates. In 106 C.E. the Nabatean kingdom was transformed into a Roman province and the dates follow the calendar of the ruling power.

Seeking to explain the Nabatean presence in the desert, Dr. Negev speculates that they may have reopened the ancient Egyptian copper and turquoise mines in southern Sinai on behalf of the Romans. Another theory is that they harvested the dates in the Firan oasis. Roman writers of the 1st century C.E. extol the quality of the dates exported to Italy from the palm groves of "Jericho, Eilat Gedli and Sinai."

The Nabatean graffiti are simple formulae combined with names. Frequently used are the phrases *shalom* (peace) and *dechar b'etzem* (remember to the good). One group of names has turned up in widely separated places, indicating that the family involved — three brothers and their father — did a lot of travelling. They are given, in varying orders (probably depending on who was doing the writing) as Aidu, Abushu and Eriyit, sons of Harlahu.

The date of Nabatean penetration into Sinai may now be pushed back a century following a discovery by one of Dr. Negev's assistants, Renata Rosenthal, on the field trip last December. Travellers in all periods had sought shade under the same rocks, and graffiti are scrawled near each other in Naba-

(Continued on page 4.)



Photos:
 Yitzhak Bar Yosef

A Jewish pilgrim carved this seven-branched candelabrum on a rock of Wadi Haggaj. The style is similar to menorah drawings found in synagogues of the sixth and seventh centuries.



These camels were drawn recently by Beduin in imitation of old drawings that are barely visible. The Beduin have taken note of the interest in rock drawings shown by visitors to Sinai.

Handwritten Hebrew text at the bottom of the page, possibly a signature or a note.

GOING UP TO JERUSALEM



The Three-Day March in the Judean Hills, held just before Pessah, is in the pilgrimage tradition.

"THREE times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread (Pessah) and in the feast of weeks (Shavuot) and in the feast of tabernacles (Succot)." This is the Biblical prescription (Deut. 16:16) for which the rabbis coined the term "Appearance."

A lengthy responsum recently published by Rabbi Mordechai Hacohen, a leading Jerusalem halachic authority, deals with the question whether the commandment of appearance is binding today, when there is no Temple and no sacrifice.

The learned rabbi cites numerous sources to prove that a pilgrimage to the Holy City is just as much a part of the Jewish religion today as it was in the time of the Temple. He concludes, however, that the fulfillment of the religious "obligation" does not require three journeys a year. A Jew fulfills this mitzva even if he makes a pilgrimage once in a lifetime as long as that pilgrimage occurs during one of the three relevant festivals.

Rabbi Hacohen cites many instances of pilgrimages in fulfillment of a religious commandment undertaken throughout the centuries by thousands of Jews, among them some of the greatest rabbis. These pilgrimages, however, were very different both in scope and character from the "going up" to Jerusalem during the time of the Temple. The joy that had attended pilgrimages when the Temple was still in existence, changed to lamentation for the loss of the splendour that was and that could now be recaptured only in memory.

There are many allusions in the Bible to the extraordinary spirit of joy which prevailed at the pilgrimages during the period of the First Temple. More detailed descriptions were preserved of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem during the last decades of the Second Commonwealth. These are to be found in Mishnaic, Midrashic and Talmudic literature as well as in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Josephus Flavius and their contemporaries.

The picture that emerges from these sources is one of magnitude and pageantry. From near and far hundreds of thousands journeyed to Jerusalem for the festivals. The Roman governor Gaius Florus (64-66 CE) counted 250,000 paschal lambs at one Festival; Josephus allots ten persons to one lamb, which would make the number of pilgrims 2,500,000. The Tosefta (Pes. 5:84b) records the census of Agrippa, who ordered the priests to take a hind leg of every paschal lamb and counted in that year 2,000,000 legs, which makes the total 12,000,000.

These figures, even if they are grossly exaggerated, point to the tremendous number of Jews who would flock to Jerusalem from all over the Holy Land as well as from all corners of the Diaspora, in order to put in an appearance during the festival.

Such an ingathering was certainly not lacking in excitement and required quite an organization. The Mishna (Bikurim, Ch.3) gives us some details on the logistics of such a journey:

"The men of the smaller towns gathered together to the town of the Ma'amad (the regional centre) and spent the night in the open place of the town and came not into the houses and early in the morning the officer (of the Ma'amad) said, 'Arise ye and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord our God.'"

"... The flute was played before them until they drew nigh to Jerusalem. The rulers and prefects and the treasurers of the Temple went forth to meet them... and all the craftsmen in Jerusalem used to rise up before them and greet them, saying: 'Brethren, men of such-and-such place, you are welcome... The flute was played before them until they reached the Temple Mount... When they reached the Temple Court, the Levites sang the song, 'I will exalt thee, O Lord, for thou hast triumphed over me!'"

ON the other side of the Euphrates, tens of thousands of people from all over Babylon would convene in the city of Na'ardea and proceed from there en masse to Jerusalem (Josephus, "Antiquities," 18.9a). Philo ("On the Laws," Book A para. 64) tells of "tens of thousands from east and west, north and south who are en route to the Temple by land and sea."

The duty of appearance is legally incumbent only upon males, yet historical records from both the First and the Second Commonwealth prove that entire families would undertake the journey together. We also hear of women who went without their husbands (Talmud, Pes. 88a) or even against the will of their spouses (ibid. 94a).

The spectacle of so many thousands of Jews meeting each other, listening to the teachings of the sages of the Sanhedrin and looking at the sights of Jerusalem, the beautiful, was an unforgettable experience. We can only wonder how the city coped with such a vast influx of tourists.

Historical evidence indicates that the authorities, as well as the population, were well organized to take care of the pilgrims, who brought of course an economic boom to the City.

The money the pilgrims spent in Jerusalem did not flow into the pockets of luxury hotels. While the religious law required the pilgrim to sleep at least one night in Jerusalem (Sifra, 134) it did

The pilgrimage up to Jerusalem (aliya l'regel) on the three festivals of Pessah, Shavuot and Succot is a commandment (mitzva) that was carried out by great throngs of Jewish pilgrims before the destruction of the Second Temple. Their numbers may have reached several millions, if one is to believe certain sources, writes Professor PINHAS PELI, who teaches Jewish thought and Jewish history at the Hebrew University and at Beersheba University.

not allow of any charge whatsoever for his accommodation. In lieu of money, inkeepers were compensated with the hides of the sacrifices (Yoma 12a). The authorities employed special squads whose job was to make sure that the wells on the route leading to Jerusalem were cleaned and that roads were in good condition (Mishna Shkalim ch.1). Thousands of tents were erected all around Jerusalem and Jewish communities abroad built special hostels in the city to accommodate their townsmen during their stay.

Notwithstanding all organization, planning and preparation, the task could not have been accomplished without a miracle to save the situation. Among the ten miracles that occurred to our forefathers, the Midrash (Abot d'Rabbi Nathan ch.2) includes the fact that "never did a man say: I did not find a bed on which to sleep in Jerusalem, nor did a man say: I felt crowded when I slept in Jerusalem."

That tourists should not complain about such conditions, that they should not say, "I felt crowded" — this certainly borders on the miraculous.

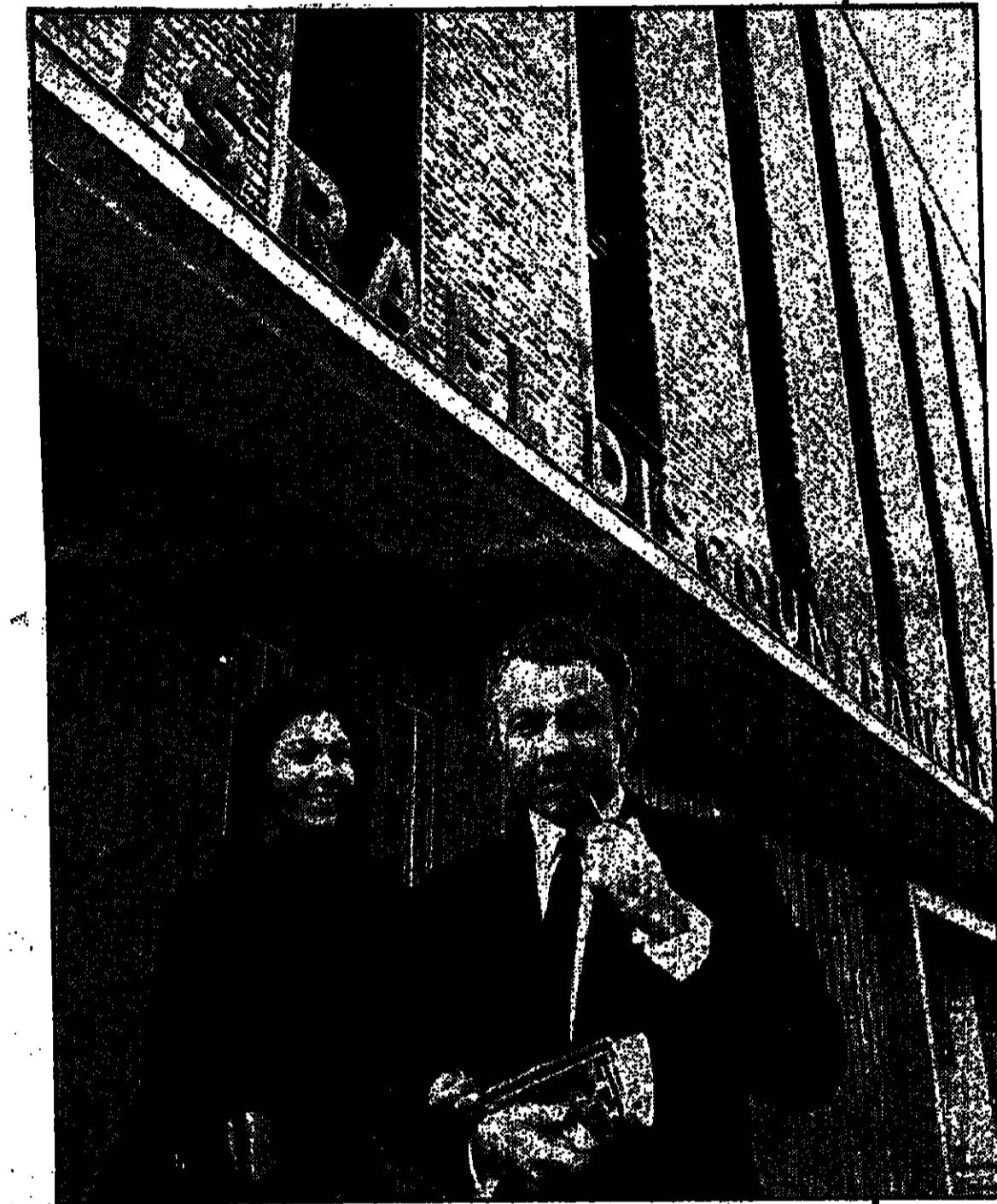
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In 419 B.C.E. the following letter was addressed by Hananiah (probably the Hananiah mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah as being in charge of Jerusalem's restoration after the Babylonian exile) to the Jewish leader, head of the Jewish garrison on Elephantine, guarding the Nile island frontier.

"...Now this year, the fifth year of the King Darius, word was sent from the King to Arsames (the Persian Governor of Egypt) saying: 'In the month of Tybi let there be a Passover for the Jewish garrison. Now do you accordingly count fourteen days of the month Nisan and keep the Passover, and from the 15th day to the 21st day of Nisan (shall be) seven days of unleavened bread. Be clean and take heed. Do not work on the 15th day and on the 21st day. Also drink no beer, and anything at all in which there is leaven do not eat from the 21st day of Nisan, seven days, 'lest it not be seen among you; do not bring (it) into your dwelling, but seal (it) up during those days. Let this be done as Darius the King commanded.'

have a drop of wine to cool his parched tongue."

In the next apartment visited by Mr. Newman were a Jewess and a little girl with "three venerable Jews partaking of their annual feast with much good cheer. Contrary to expectation as well as to the law, they offered us a piece of unleavened bread... and a bit of herb, not unlike American lettuce, and exceedingly bitter to the taste. The three old Jews were advanced in years, beyond the allotted time of human life... They conversed freely as to their national and religious condition, regarding themselves under the Turks as degraded and oppressed as their fathers were under the domination of Pharaoh. Yet they were not without hope; 'Elias would soon come. Their land would be deli-

silver in his possession, his cautiousness was the reason assigned for his seeming discourtesy, as his external poverty must be the safeguard of his valuable possessions. Restrained by no such fears, the clerk received us with great cordiality. His son and daughters, and all his grandchildren, had gathered beneath the parental roof and, forgetting Israel's ancient sorrows and present misfortunes, they gave themselves up to the freedom and unbounded joy of home. They laughed and talked, sang and shouted, ate and drank, as their emotions rose and appetite demanded."

However superficial his observation and understanding, Newman at least shows some personal sympathy. Not so Mrs. Sarah Barclay Johnson, whose book "Hadji in Syria, or Three Years in Jerusalem," published in Philadelphia in 1858, smells strongly of the ignorance, prejudice and presumption of so many of the pious snobs who went a-muzzing in Jerusalem. She writes:

"The Passover is sadly changed. Instead of killing a lamb and observing the solemn ritual of the Bible, every family slaughters a chicken, which is eaten with salt, vinegar and herbs."

The shallowness of her understanding and the dishonesty of her reporting are demonstrated when she continues:

"Still more absurd, and at the same time painful and disgusting, is their manner of celebrating the feast of Purim, when every Jew, both young and old, male and female, is required to become so intoxicated as to be unable to distinguish between cursing Haman and blessing Mordecai. How deplorable is such a departure from the law of Moses, which indeed is now almost entirely discarded by them!"

VERY different in every way is Elizabeth Anne Finn, wife of the British Consul in Jerusalem who, with the acquiescence

of his Government, took the Jews of Palestine under his protection even though few of them could claim British nationality. In her "Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn" — published nine years after her death — in 1921, at the age of 96 — she does not describe the Passover, but tells of a case of the blood libel that has so often accompanied the festival.

"Early in 1847 a very serious business had occurred in Jerusalem, namely the blood accusation. A Greek lad threw a stone at a little Jewish boy in the street; wonderful to tell, the Jewish boy returned it (generally they ran away for safety) hit the other and wounded him on the ankle. There were many pilgrims in the city and immediately there was an uproar. The cry was that the Jews had endeavoured to pro-

published in New York in 1954 when he was 80 years old. He was brought to Palestine as a child by his father, who was one of the founders of Rishon le-Zion. After some time at the Mikve Yisrael agricultural school he studied medicine in Geneva and Paris, returning to Palestine in 1899. Finding no scope for a doctor in the tiny settlements of those days, he set up practice among the Arabs and Samaritans in Hebron. He had many patients but small profit. To demand fees from those able to pay, government officials and other notables, "I discovered was a breach of etiquette." Agitation against him stirred up by a politically powerful landowner and soap manufacturer, who sent him some crates of onions as "part payment" for the professional care of his family of four wives and 22 children, caused him to flee the town. He emigrated to Australia.

Dr. Schalit's book is particularly interesting for its vignettes of life in the primitive Palestine of only 80 years ago. Here is his description of the Seder at Mikve Yisrael:

"Our economist, M. Klots, was in charge. A couple of the older boys brought in wagonloads of vine prunings for the oven. Kosher flour was brought all the way from Jaffa. A representative of the Beth Din in Jerusalem arrived to supervise the baking of the matzoth... (Here follows a description of the home-baking).

"Our Cantor, who was also our Hebrew Teacher, conducted the Seder, according to the Sephardic rite. In essentials this does not differ much from ours, the Ashkenaz. Yet, it all seemed strange to me. The chanting was different and so were the recitations. Both seemed tedious... The Cantor tried for a French rendition but he soon slipped into his native Baghdad-Arabic sing-song. The asking of the questions, a jolly feature of the ceremony at home, was here turned into a sort of exam. There was no joking theft of the afikomen here.

(Continued on page 14)

STORIES OF THE SEDER

By S. BENARON



"The Passover Seder," engraving from Bernard Picart's "The History of the Religions of the Peoples of the World," Amsterdam, 1723. From the Michael Kanil Collection, Jerusalem, photographed by David Harris.

IN 1864, the Rev. J.P. Newman, an English Methodist clergyman, published his book "From Dan to Beersheba, or The Land of Promise as It Now Appears." He speaks of the Jews of Jerusalem "numbering more than 7,700 souls" and finds that "as Jews in London and Paris, Rotterdam and Rome, Constantinople and Cairo, the Jewish Quarter is remarkable only for equality, and the recidense of old clothes and second-hand wares in general."

Newman visited four Jewish households celebrating the Passover "which I was invited to witness by a Christian merchant of Jerusalem whose reputation among the Jews made him a welcome guest."

"Calling first on a family of moderate circumstances, we found them already seated around the table... In obedience to the command all the members of the household were present, including parents, sons and daughters, and daughters-in-law... Three lamps were burning on the table, and as many were suspended from the ceiling directly above... symbols of the Trinity... To represent the hasty departure of their fathers from Egypt, and in obedience to the paschal law, each person was attired as for a journey... The whole family recited portions of their history in concert. Alternately they were jubilant and indignant, when Moses triumphed they shouted; when Pharaoh was cruel they cursed him, and in their joining room lived the banker's wife, whose inactivity to keep the Passover alone induced him to invite to his abode a widow and her two daughters... In the strange they dipped their finger in clear, who explained why his master did not receive us. Unwilling to allow a stranger to see upon the floor, they enumerated therewith the plagues of Egypt, declaring Pharaoh should not

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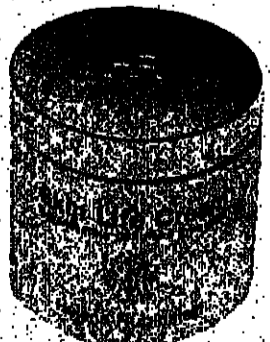
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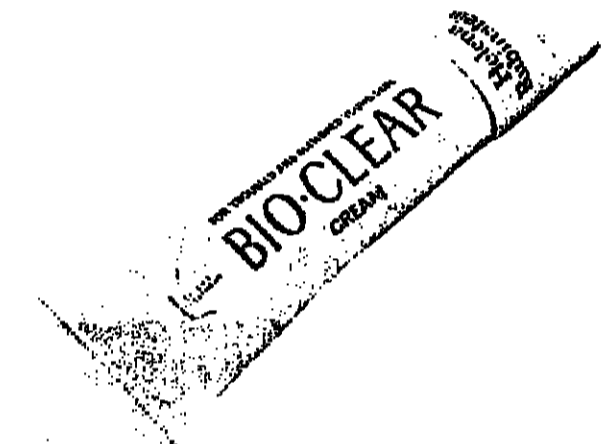
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SEDER

(Continued from page 11)

Hebrew Teacher, conducted the Seder, according to the Sephardic rite. In essentials this does not differ much from ours, the Ashkenazi. Yet, it all seemed strange to me. The chanting was different and so were the recitations. Both seemed tedious... The Cantor tried for a French rendition but he soon slipped into his native Bagdadian-Arabic sing-song. "The asking of the questions, a jolly feature of the ceremony at home, was here turned into a sort of exam. There was no joking theft of the afikomen here, the broken piece of matzah being given into the custody of a boy guardian. Nor was the wine goblet set aside for the prophet Elijah. However, I enjoyed the Sephardic rendition of the final portion of the service... At home this part was rushed through; but at Mikveh Israel it was as musical as a madrigal, one boy chanting the questions in Arabic and the rest responding, also in Arabic. The voices were accompanied by clapping of hands."

Petah Tikva seder

The following account of the first Seder celebrated in the first Jewish agricultural settlement in modern Palestine, Petah Tikva, is taken from the memoirs of Tuvia Salomon:

"The Pessah of 1879 was celebrated by Gutman, Shtamper and Raab and his children in the barn, from which all the fodder had been emptied... David Gutman, the oldest in our group, sat at the head of the table round which sat all his wife's children, whom he was bringing up, and the other members of the group with their families parents and children, little ones and adults..."

"He said, 'This night is Israel's night of remembrance for the signs and wonders that our God wrought for our fathers when they left Egypt... On this night we should pronounce the Shehechianu blessing with redoubled fervour: for his having kept us alive to set up the first agricultural settlement in our holy Land and to pave the road for those who will follow us. We here are the first birds heralding the dawn...'

"Yehoshua Shtamper followed, saying, '... This festival is also to be called the Festival of Spring. But what sense of Spring did we have last year there in Jerusalem crowded up within the walls? What flower, what sign of Spring did we see there? The mouth mumbled the word 'Spring', but the heart asked 'Where, where is the Spring? Where is the freedom?' It is only here, in this place, that, thanks to our God, we feel the freedom and the Spring in their fulness, here on the land... We were only a few here. But out of our vision ten more came; and out of that vision a hundred will come; and the hundred will become a thousand; and the thousand will become ten thousand; and the ten thousand... millions...'

THERE was a Seder in a Nazi concentration camp. The Jews had no matza, only crusts of the bread that is forbidden to be eaten on Pessah. One of the prisoners awaiting death was a rabbi who uttered a prayer that is not to be found in any Hagadah: "Lord God, You have commanded us not to touch leavened bread on the Passover. Only matza may we eat. Why, God, do you prevent us from obeying your commandment?" It strikes a note of anguish and anger. Yet, because there is no despair in it, it is also perhaps a note of faith and hope.

PAGE FOURTEEN

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You're obviously quite well aware that Jerusalem is 4,000 years old. That it is the most sacred place for Jews and that it's possibly the most beautiful city in the world.

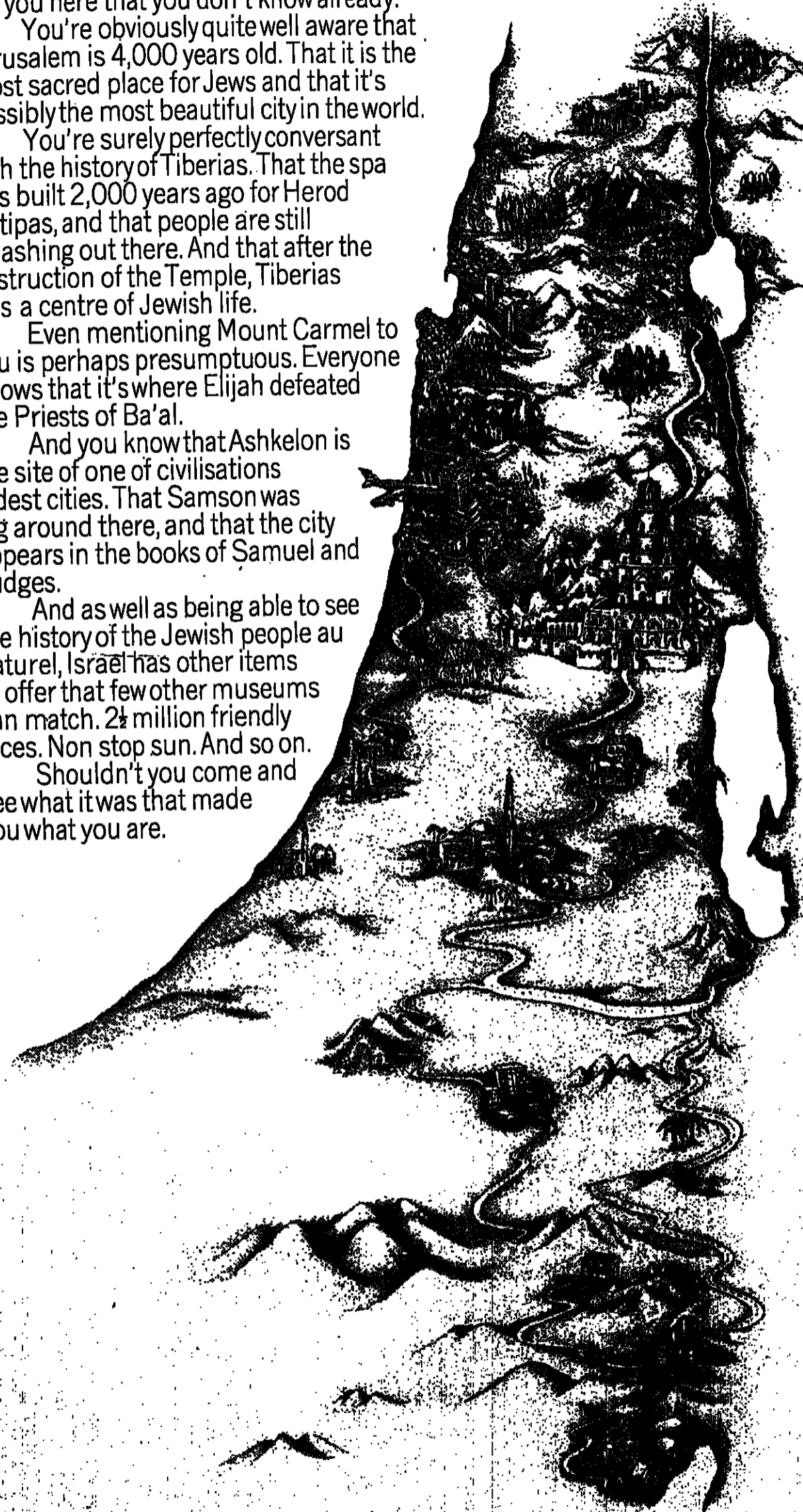
You're surely perfectly conversant with the history of Tiberias. That the spa was built 2,000 years ago for Herod Antipas, and that people are still splashing out there. And that after the destruction of the Temple, Tiberias was a centre of Jewish life.

Even mentioning Mount Carmel to you is perhaps presumptuous. Everyone knows that it's where Elijah defeated the Priests of Ba'al.

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HALEVI**

A BILU PESSAH



David Yudelevich

It was the wave of pogroms and persecution which swept over Russian Jewry in the spring of 1881, following the assassination of a liberal-hating and Jew-hating Tsar, which resulted in the formation of BILU. Let the Jews leave his country, was the Tsar's response to the reports of violence. "The western borders are open to them." Many took him at his word — among them a group of students and young people who until that time had been far removed from all things Jewish and were passionate believers in Russian socialism. The pogroms and the Tsar's response to them opened their eyes to the great delusion under which they had lived and thought.

The leader of this group was Yisrael Belkind, who was preparing himself for entry to Kharkov University.

After furious arguments within the group, its members came to the conclusion that there was no future for the Jews among the Gentiles, and they all swore an oath "to try to return Israel to the Land of Israel, its true patrimony." Their manifesto "Bel Ya'acov, lehul ve'nalho" (House of Jacob, Come Let Us Go) abbreviated into their name — BILU.

They moved quickly from words to action. On Tammuz 19, 5642 (1882) the first contingent of BILU members disembarked at Jaffa port, 13 young men and one girl. Within a short time others arrived, until their number topped 50.

Absorption pangs

With neither a government nor a Histadrut to help them, they suffered the pangs of absorption in full measure. They worked in the fields of Mikve Yisrael and Zichron Ya'acov, back-breaking work for which they had neither training nor expertise. But the sensation of freedom, of being able to walk with head held high, and to look any man in the eye, the feeling of not being strangers in someone else's country — this compensated for all the hardships.

Their greatest aspiration was to own their own holdings. Karl Netter, the founder of Mikve Yisrael, enthusiastically supported their efforts to achieve this, but with his sudden death in October, 1882, their hopes were dashed. Salvation came from another quarter. Yehiel Michel Pines, who had come to Jerusalem in 1878, persuaded them that working the land was not the only way of building up the yeshuva. Industry, crafts and manufacturing were just as vital. His advice was that part of the group remain in Mikve Yisrael while the others go back with him to Jerusalem and learn various crafts and skills until land were found for all of them to settle on. Eight of the Bilurim took his advice.

David Yudelevich learned knife-grinding and Hillel Mintz iron-work. Ozer Dov Lipshitz studied and lived at the Alliance School.

Ya'akov Mohilansky discarded the group's modern workaday clothes, donned a long kaftan and grew his peyot and entered the yeshiva of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin. This was Ben-Yehuda's idea. "We must prepare a suitable person to represent us both within (Jewry) and with the outside world. Our representative at present is the Haham Bashi... What a miserable representation for our People... We great rabbi! great in Torah, great in secular knowledge, great in worldly affairs and great in political perception. In brief, a great Jew whom the title 'rabbi' will befit in his dealings with his fellow Jews and the epithet 'great' will befit in his dealings with the world outside." Mohilansky had been an itzi — a prodigy — in the yeshivot in Russia, and so Ben-Yehuda chose him for this august destiny.

Dvora Syrut, the only girl in the group, went to live with the Ben-Yehudas, and helped Dvora Ben-Yehuda with the housework and with preparing meals for the other Bilurim, who all ate at the Ben-Yehuda home.

Belkind, Dubnow, Shertok, Rozovsky and Yudelevich clubbed together to rent a one room flat at the edge of Nahlat Shiva. Their total furniture comprised a table, two benches, a large reed mat, and a big pillow which Yudelevich's mother had given him when he left for Eretz Israel. All five contrived to share the pillow by sleeping on it each for a two-hour shift per night. As their skill in their newly acquired crafts improved and they earned some money, the five were able to rent a large eight-room apartment; each had a bedroom and three rooms were converted into workshops.

MEANWHILE, their first Pessah in Israel approached. Some of their friends at Mikve Ya'acov came up to Jerusalem for the festival and there were 20 young Bilurim seated for the seder in Ben-Yehuda's home. David Yudelevich recalls the atmosphere of that night: "On the eve of the festival, as all these fine young men filed into Pines' Beit Midrash, with Ben-Yehuda at their head, the room was filled with the radiance of youth. Pines' heart throbbed with joy... From the *beit midrash* we went to Ben-Yehuda's house. And the house was full of light — the light of Dvora our mother. And how the face of our teacher Ben-Yehuda shone with light!... 'Eretz, eretz, eretz' "We sat and talked about the Exodus from Egypt. And after the meal we all went out of Nahlat Shiv'a into the wide Rohov Yaffo with a song, a Hebrew song, on our lips. From the mouths of 20 young men the song cleft the night air: "Hurry brothers, hurry," the song which Pines had composed for us. Our spirits soared, our hearts and souls leapt. A fire seized Boro-

chovitz, he flung his hat into the air crying 'Eretz, eretz, eretz!' For 2,000 years your ears haven't heard the sound of living Hebrew. And now we have come back to you, to revive you and love your soil. We swear it! And he threw himself on the ground and kissed the holy earth roaring and crying 'Eretz, eretz, eretz!' And the mountains of Judea trembled and echoed his cry: 'Eretz, eretz, eretz!'"

THIS YEAR
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Left: Seder scene, featuring the 'Four Sons,' from the Offenbach Haggada, 1790. Above, two pages from the Livorno Haggada of the 19th century; Right, frontispiece from the Amsterdam Haggada, with copper-plate engravings by Avraham Bar-Ya'acov, Amsterdam, 1712. All from the Michael Kaniel Collection, photographed by David Harris.



The Haggada, which is read at the Seder table tonight, is often richly decorated. MICHAEL KANIEL, a Jerusalem expert on Jewish ceremonial art, tells the story of some of them, from the famous 'Golden Haggada' of the 14th-century Germany to the 20th century Haggadot illustrated by contemporary artists.

The most illustrated of Jewish books

THE Passover Haggada is more than just a story-book of the Exodus. While it contains a description of the bondage in Egypt, the Ten Plagues and the Exodus, it is essentially a religious service of thanksgiving. Known also as "The Book of Liberation" or "The Book of the Redemption," the Haggada is a volume of both reminiscences and hopeful expectations, containing, as it does, expressions of yearning for the ingathering of the dispersed of Israel to Zion, which ends with the dramatic and rousing cry — Next Year in Jerusalem!

The essentials of the Haggada text are more than 2,200 years old, having been compiled by the members of the Sanhedrin, mainly from passages from the Bible. Additions were made by Tanaitic sages of the Talmud during the following four hundred years, and by the Amoraitic period (about the third century C.E.) the Haggada was almost complete. Some final Seder songs were added in the Geonic period, during the ninth and tenth centuries.

The oldest existing version of the Haggada is that of Saadiah Gaon, which appears in his Siddur dating back to the tenth century. Other ancient versions of the Haggada are those of the Mahzor Vitry (11th century) and that of

Malmonides, as it appears in the *Mishneh Torah* (12th century). The Haggada rapidly became one of the most beloved of Jewish books, edited, translated and commented upon more than any other of its type. Since the first Haggada to be printed as a separate book was published in Guadalajara, Spain, in 1492, more than 3,100 editions have appeared, coming from almost every Jewish community large enough to have a Hebrew printing press.

Dozens of translations

The Haggada has been translated into dozens of languages and dialects. Notable among the latter are Yiddish and Ladino; Judaeo-Arabic, Judaeo-Persian, Judaeo-Italian, and Judaeo-Greek. The translations were usually published together with the Hebrew text. Hundreds of rabbis and scholars have written commentaries on the Haggada. Publishers vied with each other to produce editions containing more and more commentaries, one of them finally achieving the staggering figure of 238.

The Haggada is the most illustrated of all Jewish books. Since its very origin, care was taken to bring the Passover story to the consciousness of the young, fulfilling the Biblical injunction

"And thou shall tell thy son..." (Exodus 13:8) — it is easy to see why it became a favourite vehicle for Jewish artists, illuminators and engravers.

Jewish artists and scribes who may have practised iconographic self-restraint with sacred synagogue books, felt no such compunction about the Haggada and felt free to give full rein to their talents when the Haggada was separated from the synagogue prayer-book around the 13th century.

Since the Haggada was a relatively small book, it was not a major expense for a man of some means to commission an artist to illustrate and decorate a manuscript copy which would not only hold the attention of the children during the lengthy Seder service, but also add a beautiful Jewish ceremonial book to his collection.

Sephardi school

Illustrated Haggadot were produced in several European countries in medieval times, but the two main schools of illustrators were the Sephardi school in 13th- and 14th-century Spain, and the Ashkenazi school in Southern Germany, during the 14th and 15th centuries.

Among the finest examples of the dozen or so medieval Spanish Haggadot extant, are the 14th-century "Sarajevo," "Kaufmann" and "Golden" Haggadot, all of which have been reproduced in recent years. Probably the most important of these and the best-known of all illuminated manuscripts is the first, now in the State Museum at Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.

A distinguishing feature of most medieval Sephardi Haggadot is a series of Biblical illustrations preceding the Hebrew text. In the "Sarajevo Haggada," there are no fewer than 89 illustrations, filling 34 pages. These miniatures, which begin with the creation and end with Moses' final blessing of the children of Israel, bear a striking resemblance to Latin Bible illuminations produced contemporaneously in Spain. But the illuminator's scrupulous abstention from anthropomorphic representations of the Divinity and his intimate knowledge of Midrashic sources, and Jewish customs, indicate clearly that he was a Jew. He may indeed, have been the scribe as well.

The "Kaufmann Haggada" is also prefaced by Biblical miniatures, but 12 full-page illuminations, distributed throughout the book, are confined to Exodus. Here again, one can safely conjecture that the artist was a Jew.

One of the most beautiful illuminated manuscripts of the medieval period, and undoubtedly the most elegant of all Haggadot, is the "Golden Haggada," so named because of the burnished gold background of its miniatures. It is prefaced with 14 full-page illuminations, including Biblical scenes from Exodus and depictions of Passover preparations. The two different illustrators of the Haggada reflect a strong French Gothic influence, but an awareness of Midrashic teachings, the inclusion of such a purely Christian element as the halo around an angel appearing to Moses at the burning bush, would indicate that the artist may have been gentile.

Medieval Ashkenazi Haggadot contain relatively few full-page Biblical illuminations, but the text is often dwarfed by sumptuous marginal illustrations, which are marginal in name only. They are apt to be less pretentious than the contemporary Sephardi Haggadot, and the illustrations lay emphasis on ceremonial and folk customs, and indeed serve as a valuable guide to the ritual, customs and dress of the Jews of that milieu.

Exceptional German Haggadot executed in the medieval period

include the 15th-century "Darmstadt Haggada" and the "Bird's Head Haggada" of about 1300. While avoiding many of the usual textual illustrations common to earlier and contemporary Haggadot, the "Darmstadt Haggada" is outstanding for its large and distinctive initial letters and its rich border designs. Particularly entertaining are the whimsical miniatures of individuals reading the Haggada, delivering dissertations or participating in discussions on it.

One of the most intriguing of all decorated manuscript Haggadot is the so-called "Bird's Head Haggada," now in the Israel National Museum in Jerusalem. While human figures abound in both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Haggadot, it is in illuminated Ashkenazi manuscripts of the late 13th and 14th centuries that we find the strange phenomenon of the substitution of the heads of birds or animals for human heads.

A reasonable explanation would appear to be that the illuminators were guided by a contemporary Halachic interpretation of the Second Commandment, permitting the depiction of human beings in Jewish religious books as long as they were incomplete. Instead of painting headless figures, artists substituted heads of birds or animals which was apparently acceptable to the Halachic authorities of the time.

The hare hunt

A common illustration in medieval Haggadot is the *Yakhnehas*, the hare hunt. *Yakhnehas* is a mnemonic for remembering the order of the blessings during the Kiddush ceremony for a festival occurring on Saturday night, when a *Havdala* ceremony is also required. The word represents the initial letters of the words *yayin* (wine), *Kiddush* (sanctification), *Ner Havdala* (candle), *Havdala* (separation) — between the holiness of the Sabbath and the holiness of the festival, and *Zman* (time — i.e., the blessing for the festival).

The punning use of the hare hunt (in German *Yag-den-has*) as a Haggada illustration was the artist's subtle method of expressing the constant pursuit of Israel by her enemies. Sometimes the hare was replaced by a stag and there are pictures of the stag reaching water, an eschatological depiction of a peaceful Israel finally reaching its own land in Messianic times. The tradition of *Yakhnehas* illustrations was to continue into the printed Haggada.

Eschatology was an essential element in these medieval Haggadot. A common illustration was Elijah blowing the great *shofar* to announce the coming of the Messiah. But one of the most popular subjects was — and remained — the Messiah himself riding into Jerusalem on his donkey.

Scribes' artwork

Little is known about the illuminators of these medieval German Haggadot, but it is thought that most of them were illuminated by the scribes themselves. One leading Jewish illustrator to whom several Haggadot have been attributed is Joel ben Simeon (also called Feibush Ashkenazi), who flourished for a while in either Bonn or Cologne and moved to northern Italy in about 1480.

It is not certain exactly when the first illustrated printed Haggada appeared, but the earliest one we know of was printed either in Spain or France, or more probably, in Constantinople or Salonica, sometime between 1504 and 1515. Only fragments of this Haggada exist

both the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Cambridge University have some — but these are sufficient to indicate that it was illustrated in the lavish style typical of the Sephardi Haggadot of the 13th and 14th centuries.

It is the "Prague Haggada" of 1526, the first complete illustrated printed one extant, which has had the greatest influence on Haggadah illustration in the past four centuries. The "Prague Haggada" is indeed a beautiful book, with fine lettering and bold ornamental initial letters and attractive woodcuts and decorations. The ornamentation features delightful vignette illustrations, all capped with three fully-decorated pages with magnificent borders, executed in bold Gothic style. With considerable justification it has been termed one of the finest productions of the 16th-century printing press in any language. Published by the brothers Gershom and Gronam Cohen, it was illustrated by Haim Shahor-Schwartz.

Venetian milestone

In 1609 a milestone was reached with the publication of the "Venice Haggada," by Israel Zifron. This featured an engraved architectural border around every page and introduced a series of vignette illustrations of preparations for the Seder, with all the participants in contemporary dress. Various of these grouped vignette illustrations were to become standard at the beginning of many illustrated Haggadot which were to appear in the years to come.

The next great milestone was the publication in 1695 of the "Amsterdam Haggada," with a completely new series of illustrations. This was the first Hebrew book in which copperplate engravings rather than woodcuts were used. They were executed by Abraham ben Jacob, a proselyte. In 1712 a new edition appeared, with additional original illustrations and other improvements, and became the prototype for many of the Ashkenazi Haggadot published over the next two and a half centuries.

A major innovation by Abraham ben Jacob was his insertion of a map of the Land of Israel, the oldest extant map of the country in Hebrew. Its insertion at the back of the Haggada, adjoining the "next year in Jerusalem" conclusion, graphically reflected Jewish yearning for the ultimate redemption and the return to their own land.

In the 19th century, the peaceful Israel finally reaching its own land in Messianic times. The tradition of *Yakhnehas* illustrations was to continue into the printed Haggada.

Eschatology was an essential element in these medieval Haggadot. A common illustration was Elijah blowing the great *shofar* to announce the coming of the Messiah. But one of the most popular subjects was — and remained — the Messiah himself riding into Jerusalem on his donkey.

Scribes' artwork

Little is known about the illuminators of these medieval German Haggadot, but it is thought that most of them were illuminated by the scribes themselves. One leading Jewish illustrator to whom several Haggadot have been attributed is Joel ben Simeon (also called Feibush Ashkenazi), who flourished for a while in either Bonn or Cologne and moved to northern Italy in about 1480.

It is not certain exactly when the first illustrated printed Haggada appeared, but the earliest one we know of was printed either in Spain or France, or more probably, in Constantinople or Salonica, sometime between 1504 and 1515. Only fragments of this Haggada exist

Haggada

(Continued from previous page)

Haggadot have been produced by leading illustrators such as Jacob Steinhardt, Joseph Budko, Arthur Szyk, Albert Rothstein, Saul Raskin and Ben Shahn.

In a commentary on the illuminated medieval Haggada which could well apply to the illustrated Haggada in general, Bruno Toller, in his work on the "Darmstadt Haggada" writes: "There is more to be got from looking at the illustrations of the Haggada than aesthetic enjoyment and a valuable insight into the history of the culture. Every picture reveals part of the soul of the medieval Jew, who, in the face of external oppression, preserved an unaffected serenity of spirit, which had its origin in a deep and, above all, a domestic religious sentiment. Thus it is also the Jewish religion which receives its faithful illumination from these illustrations..."

— both the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Cambridge University have some — but these are sufficient to indicate that it was illustrated in the lavish style typical of the Sephardi Haggadot of the 13th and 14th centuries.

It is the "Prague Haggada" of 1526, the first complete illustrated printed one extant, which has had the greatest influence on Haggadah illustration in the past four centuries. The "Prague Haggada" is indeed a beautiful book, with fine lettering and bold ornamental initial letters and attractive woodcuts and decorations. The ornamentation features delightful vignette illustrations, all capped with three fully-decorated pages with magnificent borders, executed in bold Gothic style. With considerable justification it has been termed one of the finest productions of the 16th-century printing press in any language. Published by the brothers Gershom and Gronam Cohen, it was illustrated by Haim Shahor-Schwartz.

Venetian milestone

In 1609 a milestone was reached with the publication of the "Venice Haggada," by Israel Zifron. This featured an engraved architectural border around every page and introduced a series of vignette illustrations of preparations for the Seder, with all the participants in contemporary dress. Various of these grouped vignette illustrations were to become standard at the beginning of many illustrated Haggadot which were to appear in the years to come.

The next great milestone was the publication in 1695 of the "Amsterdam Haggada," with a completely new series of illustrations. This was the first Hebrew book in which copperplate engravings rather than woodcuts were used. They were executed by Abraham ben Jacob, a proselyte. In 1712 a new edition appeared, with additional original illustrations and other improvements, and became the prototype for many of the Ashkenazi Haggadot published over the next two and a half centuries.

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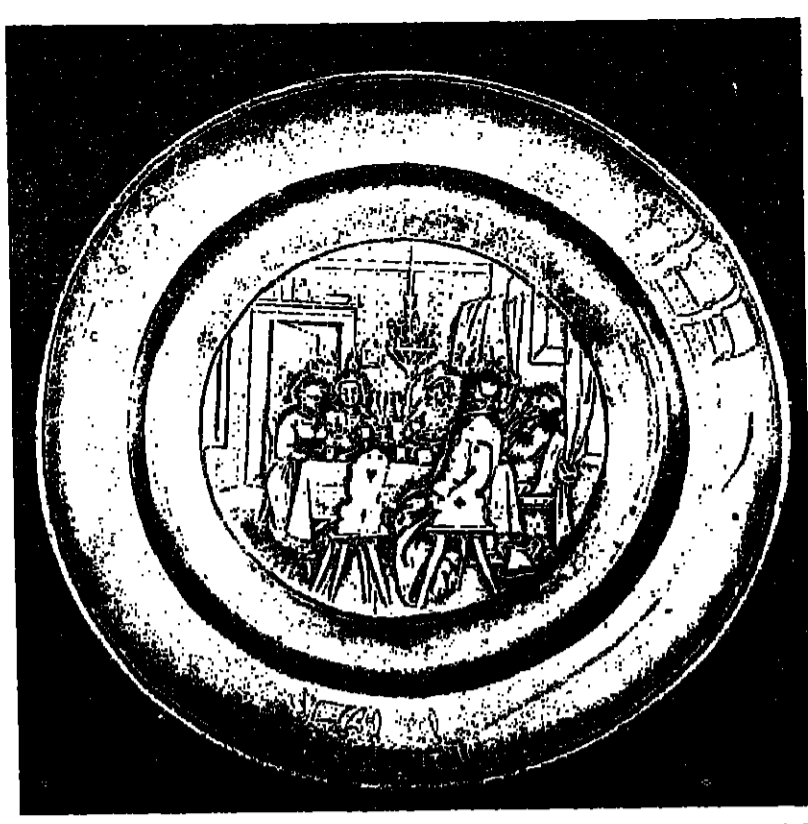
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Seder tray, pewter, featuring words 'Pessah, matza, maror' on the rim and seder scene in the centre. (From Michael Kaniel Collection, photo by David Harris)



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Wheat and barley

WHEAT and barley, the two staple cereals of the Middle East, both included under the generic name *dagan*, play prominent roles during Passover. Matza is, of course, made from wheat flour, but it is the barley harvest which is celebrated with the bringing of the *Omer* on the second day of the festival. Strangely enough, nowhere in the Bible is it stated explicitly that the *Omer* was of barley, but there is complete unanimity on this between the ancient authorities and modern commentators. The reason is simple. Wheat does not ripen in Israel until Shavuot, seven weeks later, and the *Karaites* actually maintain that matza must be made of barley. Their ostensible reason is that barley is taken out, poor man's bread, but it can reasonably be assumed that the fact that the

barley harvest is ready by Passover was an added consideration. The flour from which the freed slaves made their first matza was presumably from the previous year's harvest, since agricultural and climatic conditions in Israel and Egypt are pretty well identical. In tomorrow's *Haftra*, however, it is stated that with the celebration of the first Passover, after Joshua had led the Children of Israel over the Jordan, the manna ceased and they ate henceforth "of the produce of the land." There is every reason to believe that this "produce of the land" was the recently gathered wheat harvest, but there is no discrepancy between the two facts. There is a simple geographical explanation. Even before that Pessah we are told that when the Children



of Israel crossed the Jordan, it was in full spate, as it always is "all the days of the harvest," due to the melting of the snows on the Hermon, I have referred to a previous occasion to the fact that the flax which forty years earlier in Egypt was "boiled" (i.e., far from ripe), was already laid out on the roof of Rahab's house in Jericho to dry. (Josh. 2:6) The answer to this is, as I pointed out at the time, that in the area of Jericho, the lowest-lying town in the world, the crops ripen much earlier than they do under normal conditions. And by the same token, the Jericho harvest which took place at the time the Children of Israel crossed over the Jordan, might well have included not only barley but wheat.

L.V. RABINOWITZ

The die of Adam

ONLY one man (Adam) was created — for the sake of peace among mankind, so that no one should say to his fellow: "My father was greater than your father." And to proclaim the greatness of the Almighty — for man mints many coins from one die and they are all identical to each other; whereas the King of Kings, the Blessed Holy One, has stamped every man with the die of Adam yet none of them is like his fellow. Therefore every person should say: "The world was created for my sake." The Blessed Holy One does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked. That night (when the Egyptians were drowning in the Red Sea), the Ministering Angels were about to burst into song before the Blessed Holy One. But He said to them: "My creatures are drowning in the sea — and you wish to serenade Me?"

Rabbi Mendel of Kotak



Silver Pessah cup, from Poland in the late 17th or early 18th century, bears inscription "Shel Eliahu" (for Elijah), and was used for the use of the Prophet at the seder table. From the Kaniel Collection, Jerusalem.

Halacha and agada

WHO is a Jew? A witness to the transcendence and presence of God; a person in whose life Abraham would feel at home, a person for whom Rabbi Akiva would feel deep affinity, a person of whom the Jewish martyrs of all ages would not be ashamed. Who is a Jew? A person whose integrity decays when unmoved by the knowledge of wrong done to other people. Who is a Jew? A person in travail with God's dreams and designs; a person to whom God is a challenge, not an abstraction. He is called upon to know of God's stake in history; to be involved in the sanctification of time and in the building of the Holy Land, to cultivate passion for justice and the ability to experience the arrival of Friday evening as an event. Who is a Jew? A person who knows how to recall and to keep alive what is holy in our people's past, and to cherish the promise and the vision of redemption in the days to come. How to assure the survival of the Jews? the best prophet of the future is the past. The wisest answer to the enigma of Jewish survival may be found, in the famous saying "God, Israel, Torah, are one." The three realities are inseparable, interdependent, and the commitment to these realities is appreciation and love. A life in which one of those commitments is missing becomes a tripod with two legs. And yet the three are not of equal standing and must be seen in the proper order of importance. Confusion in the order — a malady that often occurs in history — results in distorting fundamental perspectives, vital values. Classical Reform Judaism concentrated on ethical monotheism as the essence of Judaism, disregarding Torah and Israel. Secular nationalism has made the people of Israel its central concern, disregarding God and Torah. While modern ultra-Orthodoxy, in its eagerness to defend observance, tends to stress the supremacy of the Torah, equating Torah with Shulhan Aruch in disregard of God and Israel, frequently leading to religious behaviorism. Today all we have are either individuals rummaging for leftovers of the heritage of a people perished, or communities extinguished; or of individuals untroubled by agony over 1,000 years vanished, over countless souls cut off from us, thinking that the present moment is the whole, that the self can live without a past.

Prof. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, the distinguished American-Jewish theologian, issued a plea for religious understanding at the recent Zionist Congress in Jerusalem. The following are excerpts from his address to the congress, in which he makes the distinction between halacha (law) and agada (legend). Prof. Heschel's address was a plea for a replacement of the love of God, even suppressing love of Israel. One gains the impression that today's Orthodoxy sometimes falls into the trap of placing the Torah higher than God, of placing deeds higher than reverence for God. Yet what does our tradition teach us? It is a duty to study Torah. While it is a duty to love God. One often gets the impression that love of Torah has replaced love of God. And love of God involves love for his children, even children who went astray, rather than hatred of Israel which we witness in many places. The spirit of the Rabbi of Satmar hovers over our rabbinic authorities. Yet, the spirit of Rabbi Levi Izhak of Berditchev is taboo. The time calls for renewal, self-purification, rejuvenation. Yet our religious establishment remains like a medieval castle, with most of its leaders engaged in building fences and walls instead of homes. As a result, the spirit of Judaism is felt by vast multitudes of young people to be a jail, not a joy. When they are forced to visit the establishment, they feel like inmates waiting to be released. The walls have many guards but there are too few windows, too few hosts. Much of religious Judaism consists of boxes of make-up. Prayer comes from the hearts, not from politics. Before our eyes, conduct and soul grow coarse. There is a rather substantial step to take: to question the exclusive ultimacy of halacha. But take the step we must not only to prevent its alienation from

our people, but primarily because it is an act of seeing the truth of our traditions. There was a time when we could presume the absoluteness of rigid *halachism*, a time when such a stance was constructive and holy. But we live today in a world filled with unprecedented demands on our conscience, cruel challenges to human dignity and compassion; to hide exclusively behind the walls and fences of rigorism is to suppress our love of Israel and understanding of God. I am grateful that in the official establishments and hotels, *kashrut* is observed. But what hurts is why only butchers-stores must be under religious supervision. Why not insist that banks, factories and those who deal in real estate should require a *teshuvah* and be operated according to religious law? When a drop of blood is found in an egg, we abhor the idea of eating the egg. But there is often more than one drop of blood in a dollar or a pound. I believe that the ultimate meaning of existence is to be a religious witness. What do I mean by a religious witness? Compassion for God and reverence for man, celebration of holiness in time, sensitivity to the mystery of being a Jew, sensitivity to the presence of God in the Bible. The most radical change that occurred in our century is the elimination of the Hebrew Bible from the greater part of the world. It is no accident that both Russia, China, and India are opposed to us. Whether the people of America, England, and France will retain authentic friendship for the state of Israel will depend upon whether the vision of the Prophets and the voice of the God of Israel will not completely vanish from their minds. For the sake of God, for the sake of Israel and the world, the people Israel and the State of Israel must emerge as religious witness, to keep the consciousness of the God of Abraham and the reverence for the Bible alive in the world. Yes, this is our task. We Jews are messengers, but messengers who forgot the message. This is a golden hour in Jewish history. Young people are waiting, craving, searching for spiritual meaning. And our leadership is unable to respond, to guide, to illumine. With Zion as evidence and inspiration, as witness and example, a renewal of our people could come about.

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THE SEPHARDI COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS IN JERUSALEM
Restoration of the four oldest synagogues in the Old City of Jerusalem
For centuries, the Sephardi synagogues were more than central places of worship. The magnificence of their architecture and the exotic charm of their interior decoration drew many visitors. In 1948 came destruction when the Jewish Quarter fell to the Arab Legion. Since the liberation in 1967, their restoration has been undertaken. They are known as the "Yohanan ben Zakai", "Elisha the Prophet", "Shabbat" and "Central".

And yet what we know about Abraham and Rabbi Akiba is not only law. In fact, most of what is contained in the Tanah is non-legal or tales. Similarly, rabbinic literature contains both *halacha* and *agada*, and the thinking of Judaism can only be adequately understood as striving for a synthesis between receptivity and spontaneity, a harmony of *halacha* and *agada*. *Halacha* represents the strength to shape one's life according to a fixed pattern; it is a form-giving force. *Agada* is the expression of man's ceaseless striving, which often defies all limitations. *Halacha* is the rationalization and schematization of living; it defines, specifies, sets measure and limit, placing life into an exact system. *Agada* deals with man's irrefutable relations to God, to other men, and to the world. *Halacha* deals with details, with each commandment separately, *agada* with the whole of life, with the totality of religious life. *Halacha* deals with the law, *agada* with the meaning of the law. *Halacha* deals with subjects that can be expressed literally; *agada* introduces us to a realm which lies beyond the range of expression. *Halacha* teaches us how to perform common acts; *agada* tells us how to participate in the eternal drama. *Halacha* gives us knowledge; *agada* exaltation. *Halacha* prescribes, *agada* suggests; *halacha* decrees, *agada* inspires; *halacha* is definite, *agada* is alive. To maintain that the essence of Judaism consists exclusively of *halacha* is as erroneous as to maintain that the essence of Judaism consists exclusively of *agada*. The interrelationship of *halacha* and *agada* is the very heart of Judaism. *Halacha* without *agada* is dead, *agada* without *halacha* is wild. Due to historical factors, *halachic* authorities not only gained the upper hand, but even frequently fostered disparagement of *agada*. In many periods of history, asceticism stood higher than intuition, *piyyut*, suppressed poetry. While *halacha* triumphed, *agada* declined. With the renewal of Jewish life in the Holy Land there was hope for a renewal of the creative power of both *halacha* and *agada*. Indeed, was it not in Safed, where a renaissance of spiritual insight came to pass? Was it not in modern history that we were blessed with the marvelous flowering of *agada* in the form of Hassidism? The Zionist idea did not originate in law, in *halacha*. It originated in the soul, in love of Israel, in *agada*. Most of those who were guided exclusively and vigorously by *halacha* raised serious objections to the Zionist movement. One of the marvels of Jewish history is the development in our people of a quality rarely paralleled in the world: love of Torah. Yet in many of today's rabbis, love of Torah, a passionate intoxication,

"Misgav Yerushalayim" — Institute of Research of the Sephardi Heritage.
The idea to establish such an institute has ripened for many years and has now been welcomed in Israel and abroad. We are negotiating with the Hebrew University to control "Misgav Yerushalayim." Five hundred years of Jewish Sephardi heritage have been almost ignored by Jewish and non-Jewish historians; a loss to Jewish history. The World Sephardi Federation in Israel and abroad has given its patronage to that institute to be erected on the historical site of the first Jewish hospital in Jerusalem facing the Temple area and the Western Wall. Government will contribute 35% of the cost of the building.

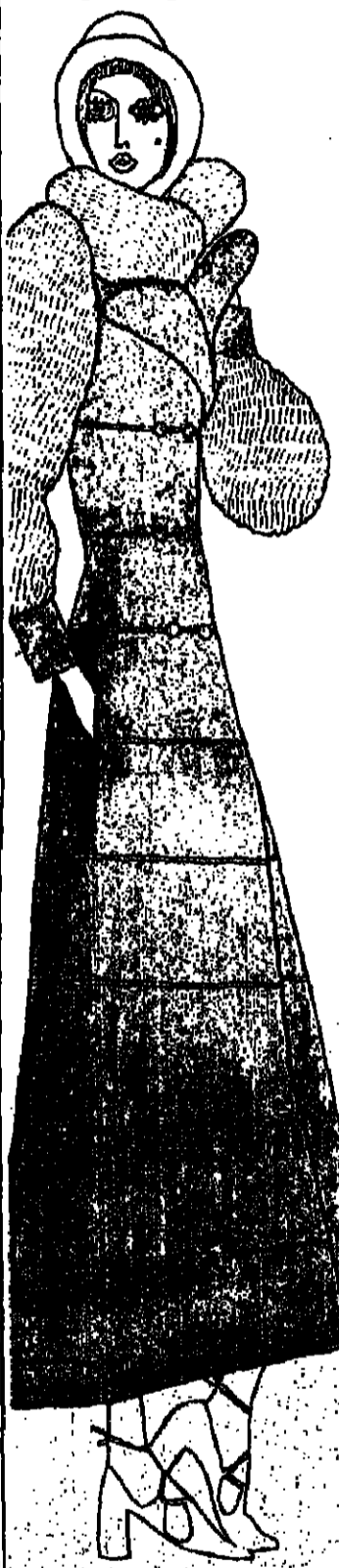
"Misgav Ladach" — is more than a hospital. It is history.
Born from the modest clinics established in the 19th century by rabbis and elders of the Sephardi community on the crest of a hill overlooking the Western Wall. It was a stronghold for the besieged, until the last bitter moments of the siege of the Old City, in 1948. All that remained of the Hospital was rubble. But "Misgav Ladach" did not die. Its name and reputation have lived on in the West Jerusalem not die. Its name and reputation have lived on in the West Jerusalem not die. Its name and reputation have lived on in the West Jerusalem not die. Its name and reputation have lived on in the West Jerusalem not die.

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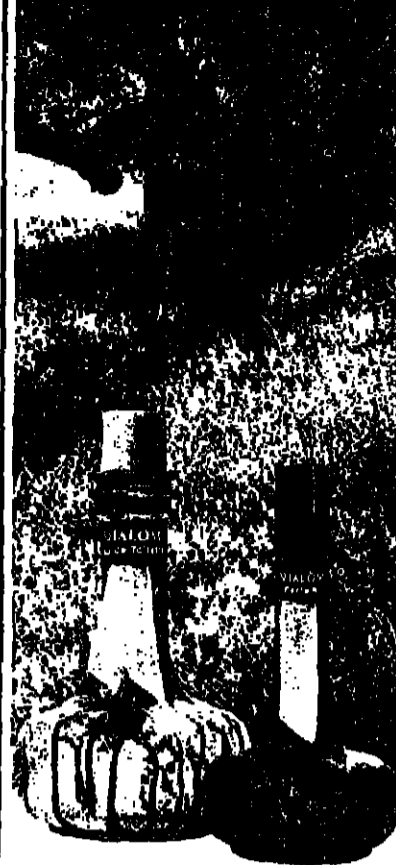
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G-d bless you all!

By the Grace of G-d
5th Day of the Week
Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5732
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Pesach, the first and "head" of all our festivals, occupies a central place in Jewish life. The content of this festival: the liberation and selection of the Jewish people, in order to become a Tora-people; the manner in which the liberation was effected through obvious miracles, which confirmed clearly and obviously that G-d is not only the Creator of the world, but also its Master, and that Divine Providence reaches all parts and details of all the created universe — this is indeed "the great foundation and solid pillar of our Tora and our faith." Therefore, we recount the subject of Yetziat Mitzraim (the Exodus from Egypt) in our prayers every day, and several times a day, in order that these fundamental principles of our faith should illuminate and permeate our daily life.

It is understandable, therefore, why the festival of Pesach, in all its details, brings out basic features which are identified with Jews, Tora and Yiddishkeit, and which serve as fundamental teachings in the daily life of the Jewish people as a whole and of the individual Jew.

* * *

Tora, Jews, and Yiddishkeit in general, as has often been discussed before, are not separate things, in that a Jew commits himself to Tora from time to time, or at certain times, and lives accordingly; but they are all one thing. In other words: in every detail of his being, both in regard to his body and his soul, as well as in all details of his daily life, a Jew must be permeated with Tora and Yiddishkeit.

One aspect of this concept is: just as the Tora embraces the whole world, and as our Sages of Blessed Memory expressed it, namely, that the Tora is the Divine "blueprint" of the whole creation with all its particulars, so also a Jew, even as an individual, through his Tora-true Jewish living, has an impact on the whole world. This means that a Jew must endeavour, and can indeed do and accomplish much, to the end that not only he himself, but also the world at large should attain perfection. This he accomplishes both directly and indirectly — through a full and all-embracing Tora-life, thereby showing a living example of what should be a man's conduct in daily life, thus eventually becoming a "light of the nations" to illumine and guide the life-path of all the nations of the world.

Realizing how much his personal conduct in the daily life affects his own perfection, and that of his family, and of the whole Jewish people, and ultimately that of the whole world, it gives him special courage and powers to overcome all difficulties. For, of what significance can one's difficulties be in comparison with accomplishment of such scope and magnitude?

* * *

If, in various periods in the past, one had to look for, and discover, the specific attribute of a Jew as "light of the nations," it had to be openly and clearly brought out in the time of the "birth" and beginning of the Jewish people — "when Israel came out of Egypt," in a manner which should reach all nations, and in a matter which encompasses their whole life.

At that time, Jews were completely surrounded, swallowed up as it were, by the non-Jewish world, and as the Tora declares: "To take out a nation from the 'inside' of a nation," from the midst of a mighty nation engulfing all nations.

Then came the first Divine commandment, addressed to the whole Jewish people, and to each individual, at the very beginning of the month of Geulah Rosh Chodesh Nissan: "Withdraw (from idolatry) and take unto you a lamb for your families and offer the Passover (sacrifice)."

The commandment was to take a lamb which was the idol of Egypt, where idolatry was the basis of the whole way of life, as in the whole world, and to abolish this idolatry.

This was to be done openly and demonstratively so that everybody should know and ask questions about it; and the Jews did explain what it was all about.

In this way it was also impressed upon the Jews, and through them (as the "light of the nations") upon all the nations, that true Geulah liberation from physical enslavement, is dependent upon liberation from spiritual enslavement.

* * *

Reflecting deeply on the content of the festival of Pesach, each year with the arrival of the days of preparation for Pesach, and especially during the days of Pesach itself, which "you shall celebrate as an everlasting ordinance, seven days," an observance lasting through all the seven days of the week, thus embracing the total life of a Jew in every situation in which he finds himself —

It refreshes and intensifies all the details of Yetziat Mitzraim which a Jew has to realize in actual life. The gist of it is:

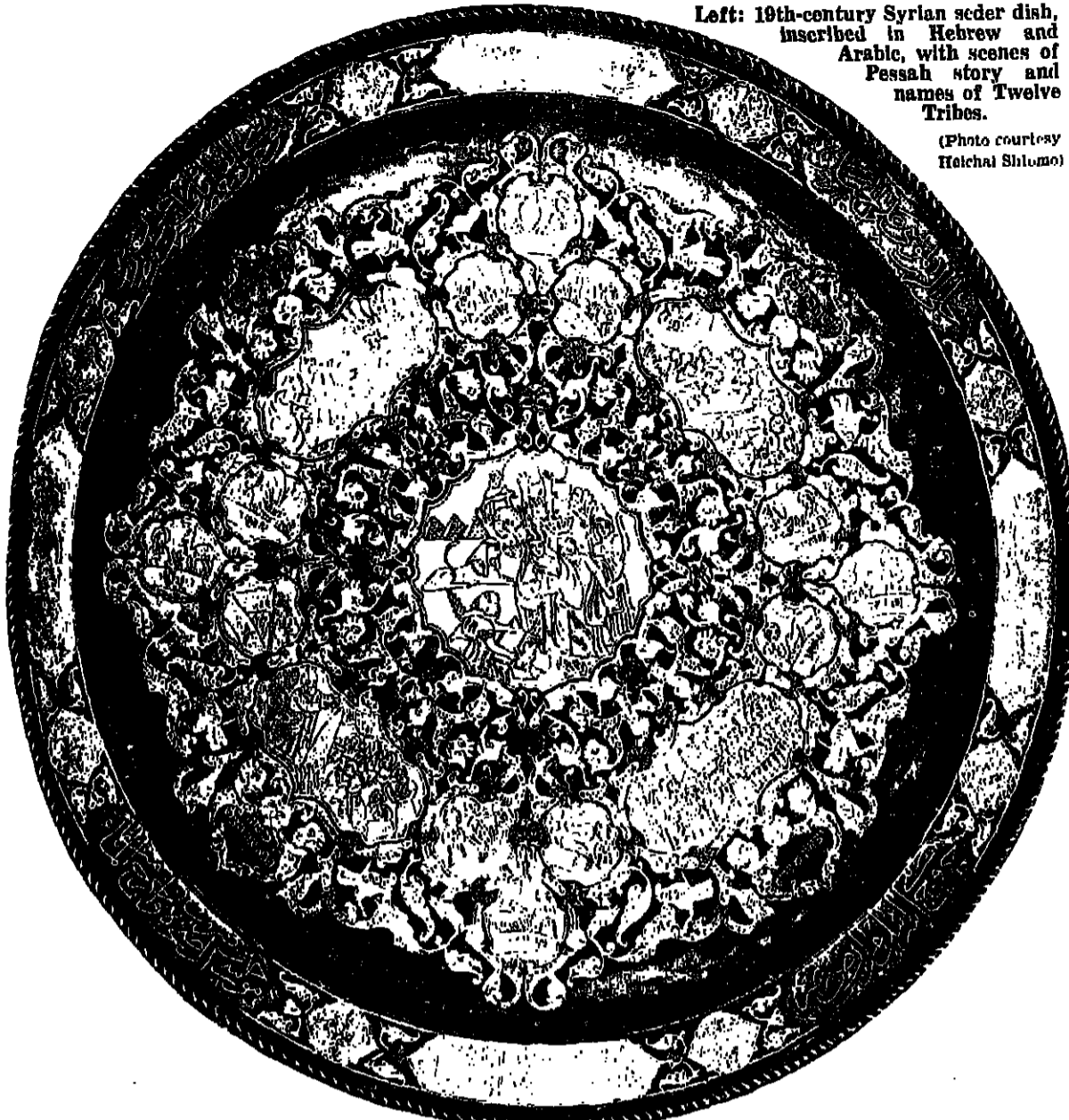
Withdraw, which — in the vein of "turn away from evil" — means: To reject each and every idolatry, particularly the one that is dominant in one's time and place.

And take unto yourselves, which — in the vein of "and do good" — means: Regardless of what one's way of life was heretofore, it is time to set out on a new road, the road of true freedom, namely, the way of the Tora and Mitzvot (engraved — on the Tablets — real "freedom" — through the Tablets), and to do this openly and with pride, with a raised arm, so that it will have the profoundest impact on the world, thus being the "light of the nations."

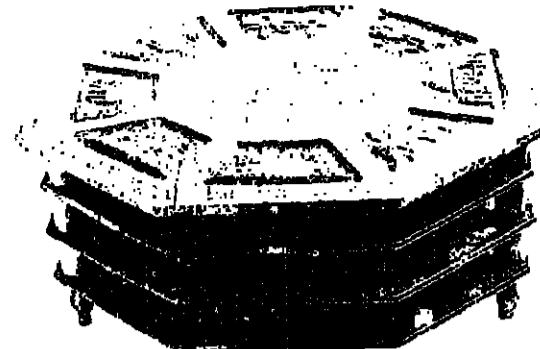
The actual experience of Yetziat Mitzraim in daily life leads to personal Geulah, the ability to overcome and liberate oneself from all difficulties which hinder that attainment of one's personal perfection; and the personal Geulah becomes a pride to, and part of, the general Geulah, the complete true Geulah of the whole Jewish people, when also the whole world will attain its true perfection, both in the area of withdraw — "to remove all idolatries from the earth," as well as in the area of take unto you — bringing about the fulfillment of the prophecy, "The nations shall go by your light."

When "G-d will shine forth on you, and His glory on you will be seen." And in fulfillment of the prayer of David, King of Israel: the "Sweetener of the Songs of Israel," uttered in behalf of all Jews and every Jew: "O, G-d, make haste to deliver me — to help me, make haste, O G-d." With the coming of our Mashiach very soon indeed.

With blessing for a Kosher and Joyous Pesach,
(Signed) **MENACHEM SCHNEERSON**
(Presented by Agudat Hasadei Habed)



Left: 19th-century Syrian seder dish, inscribed in Hebrew and Arabic, with scenes of Pesach story and names of Twelve Tribes.
(Photo courtesy Heichal Shalom)



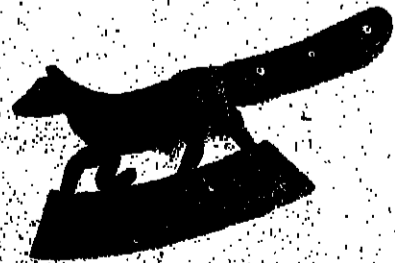
Wooden seder tray, featuring eight carvings of Holy Land sites and word matzah in centre. The three shelves are for the three matzot used in the seder service. Jerusalem, 1985.
(Michael Kaniel collection)



17th-century ivory seder goblet, from southern Germany, bears legend "Shiah et Ami" (Let My People Go). On bottom, it is signed in Hebrew, "The work of Yosef Ben Yitzhak."
(Photo-courtesy Heichal Shalom)



"Baking the Matzah," engraving in "Sefer Haminhagim," Amsterdam, 1768.
(Michael Kaniel collection)



Chopper from Eastern Europe, 18th century, used in making haroset.
(Michael Kaniel collection)



"The Search for Chametz," pre-Pesach housecleaning. Engraving from Bernard Picart's "The History of the Religions of the Peoples of the World."
(Michael Kaniel collection)

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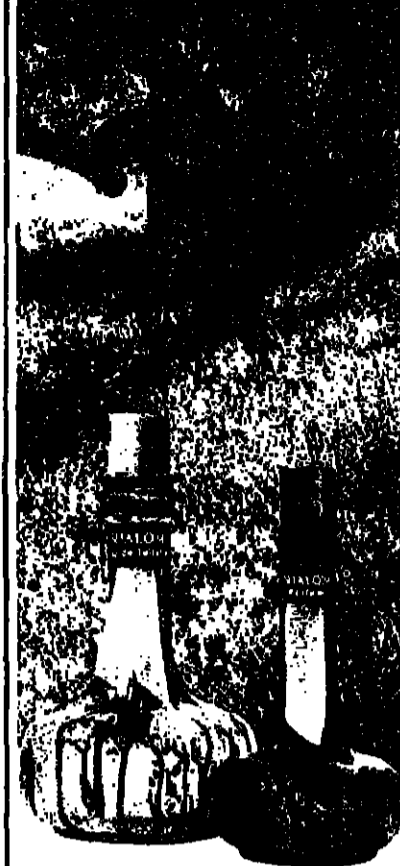


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To the Sons and Daughters of Our People Israel, Everywhere
G-d bless you all!

By the Grace of G-d
5th Day of the Week
Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5782
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Pesach, the first and "head" of all our festivals, occupies a central place in Jewish life. The content of this festival: the liberation and selection of the Jewish people, in order to become a Tora-people; the manner in which the liberation was effected through obvious miracles, which confirmed clearly and obviously that G-d is not only the Creator of the world, but also its "Master," and that Divine Providence reaches all parts and details of all the created universe — this is indeed "the great foundation and solid pillar of our Tora and our faith." Therefore, we recount the subject of Yetziat Mitzraim (the Exodus from Egypt) in our prayers every day, and several times a day, in order that these fundamental principles of our faith should illuminate and permeate our daily life.

It is understandable, therefore, why the festival of Pesach, in all its details, brings out basic features which are identified with Jews, Tora and Yiddishkeit, and which serve as fundamental teachings in the daily life of the Jewish people as a whole and of the individual Jew.

* * *

Tora, Jews, and Yiddishkeit in general, as has often been discussed before, are not separate things, in that a Jew commits himself to Tora from time to time, or at certain times, and lives accordingly; but they are all one thing. In other words: in every detail of his being, both in regard to his body and his soul, as well as in all details of his daily life, a Jew must be permeated with Tora and Yiddishkeit.

One aspect of this concept is: just as the Tora embraces the whole world, and as our Sages of Blessed Memory expressed it, namely, that the Tora is the Divine "blueprint" of the whole creation with all its particulars, so also a Jew, even as an individual, through his Tora-true Jewish living, has an impact on the whole world. This means that a Jew must endeavour, and can indeed do and accomplish much, to the end that not only he himself, but also the world at large should attain perfection. This he accomplishes both directly and indirectly — through a full and all-embracing Tora-life, thereby showing a living example of what should be a man's conduct in daily life, thus eventually becoming a "light of the nations" to illumine and guide the life-path of all the nations of the world.

Realizing how much his personal conduct in the daily life affects his own perfection, and that of his family, and of the whole Jewish people, and ultimately that of the whole world, it gives him special courage and powers to overcome all difficulties. For, of what significance can one's difficulties be in comparison with accomplishment of such scope and magnitude?

* * *

If, in various periods in the past, one had to look for, and discover, the specific attribute of a Jew as "light of the nations," it had to be openly and clearly brought out in the time of the "birth" and beginning of the Jewish people — "when Israel came out of Egypt," in a manner which should reach all nations, and in a manner which encompasses their whole life.

At that time, Jews were completely surrounded, swallowed up as it were, by the non-Jewish world, and as the Tora declares: "To take out a nation from the 'inside' of a nation," from the midst of a mighty nation engulfing all nations.

Then came the first Divine commandment, addressed to the whole Jewish people, and to each individual, at the very beginning of the month of Geulah Rosh Chodesh Nissan: "Withdraw (from idolatry) and take unto you a lamb for your families and offer the Passover (sacrifice)."

The commandment was to take a lamb which was the idol of Egypt, where idolatry was the basis of the whole way of life, as in the whole world, and to abolish this idolatry.

This was to be done openly and demonstratively so that everybody should know and ask questions about it; and the Jews did explain what it was all about.

In this way it was also impressed upon the Jews, and through them (as the "light of the nations") upon all the nations, that true Geulah liberation from physical enslavement, is dependent upon liberation from spiritual enslavement.

* * *

Reflecting deeply on the content of the festival of Pesach, each year with the arrival of the days of preparation for Pesach, and especially during the days of Pesach itself, which "you shall celebrate as an everlasting ordinance, seven days," an observance lasting through all the seven days of the week, thus embracing the total life of a Jew in every situation in which he finds himself —

It refreshes and intensifies all the details of Yetziat Mitzraim which a Jew has to realize in actual life. The gist of it is:

Withdraw, which — in the vein of "turn away from evil" — means: To reject each and every idolatry, particularly the one that is dominant in one's time and place.

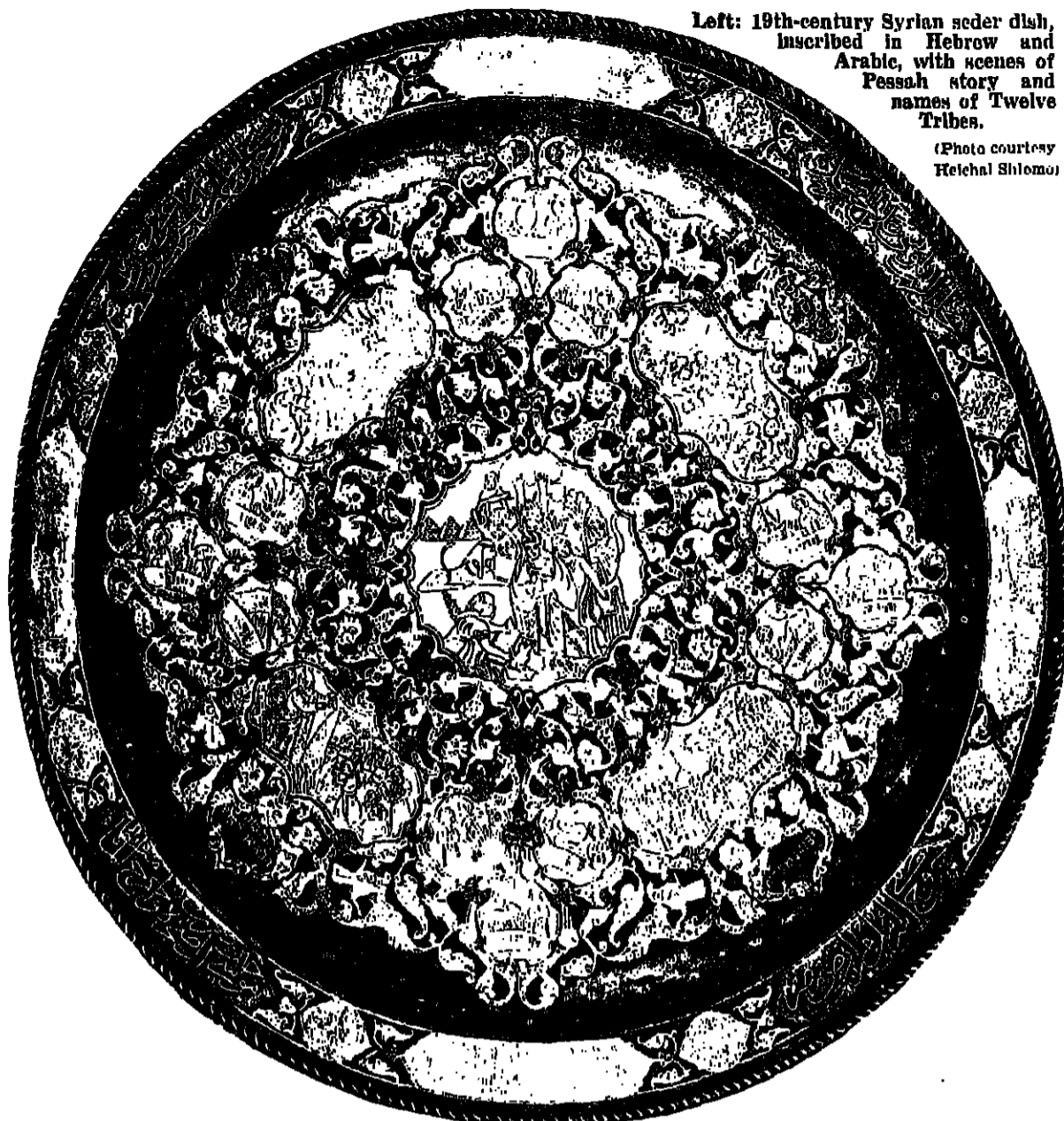
And take unto yourselves, which — in the vein of "and do good" — means: Regardless of what one's way of life was heretofore, it is time to set out on a new road, the road of true freedom, namely, the way of the Tora and Mitzvot (engraved — on the Tablets — real "freedom" — through the Tablets); and to do this openly and with pride, with a raised arm, so that it will have the profoundest impact on the world, thus being the "light of the nations."

The actual experience of Yetziat Mitzraim in daily life leads to personal Geula, the ability to overcome and liberate oneself from all difficulties which hinder that attainment of one's personal perfection; and the personal Geula becomes a prelude to, and part of, the general Geula, the complete true Geula of the whole Jewish people, when also the whole world will attain its true perfection, both in the area of withdraw — "to remove all idolatries from the earth," as well as in the area of take unto you — bringing about the fulfillment of the prophecy, "The nations shall go by your light."

When "G-d will shine forth on you, and His glory on you will be seen." And in fulfillment of the prayer of David, King of Israel, the "Sweetener of the Songs of Israel," uttered in behalf of all Jews and every Jew: "O, G-d, make haste to deliver me — to help me, make haste, O G-d."

With the coming of our Mashiach very soon indeed.

With blessing for a
Kosher and Joyous Pesach,
(Signed) MENACHEM SCHNEBERSON
(Presented by Agudat Haasidai Habab)



Left: 19th-century Syrian seder dish, inscribed in Hebrew and Arabic, with scenes of Pesach story and names of Twelve Tribes.

(Photo courtesy Hetchel Shlomo)



Wooden seder tray, featuring eight carvings of Holy Land sites and scenes from the Pesach story and names of Twelve Tribes. The three shalves are for the three matzot used in the seder service. Jerusalem, 1985. (Photo courtesy Hetchel Shlomo)



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"Baking the Matzot," engraving in "Sefer Haminhagim," Amsterdam, 1768. (Michael Kanief collection)



"The Song of the Seder," engraving in "Sefer Haminhagim," Amsterdam, 1768. (Michael Kanief collection)